Once again the difficulties of her future were sweeping over her. She was afraid that, because he disapproved, the Duke would not be anxious to rent her a cottage on his estate. She had no idea at the moment who else she could ask. "This afternoon," she decided, "I must ask him if his secretary would be kind enough to try to find any of Papa's relations who might help me."

She was hoping that the Duke had not forgotten to arrange for her father's publishers to come to the house. That was more important than anything else.

When they returned to Park Lane it was time for luncheon. Luella, as she washed her hands, thought with a leap of her heart that she would see the Duke. She was, however, disappointed when she came downstairs to find that, not only was Mrs Alcombe having luncheon with them, there were also three friends of the Duke who had turned up unexpectedly.

They were, she discovered, neighbours from the country. They were joining with him in constructing a race-course in the local vicinity. It would create employment for the local men. It would also be a place where they could try out their racehorses before they entered them at Newmarket or the other established race-courses. The three men and the Duke had a lot to discuss.

Luella could only listen and think as she watched him how handsome he was. He was also, she realised, extremely intelligent, and in some way remarkably like her father. He always seemed to have something original to suggest which had not occurred to other

people. As she watched him she knew it was a joy and a delight she did not like to express even to herself.

Enrico ate a large meal after which Luella took him into another room on the ground floor. She knew it was where the Duke would entertain the Italian Ambassador when he arrived. Enrico, however, wanted to play with the toys that had been found for him upstairs. She took him up to the boudoir which opened out of his bedroom and told the housemaid who had looked after him to keep him amused.

"He be ever so 'appy with them toys, Miss," the housemaid said, "and I've brought some more down from t'attics. There's a great big pile of 'em up there, an' it seems a pity to waste 'em."

"It does indeed," Luella agreed, "and thank you very much for thinking of it."

Enrico was delighted with his new toys. He started to set them out around him on the floor and Luella returned downstairs. As she did so she saw that the three men who had come to luncheon were departing.

Now, she thought, she could be alone with the Duke. Mrs Alcombe had said earlier that she had a meeting this afternoon and would not be back until tea time. Luella went to the room where the Ambassador was to be entertained and waited.

The Duke, having said goodbye to his friends, came in smiling. "I thought I might find you here, Luella," he said. "Where is the boy?"

"He is upstairs playing with some more toys which have been found in the attic," Luella replied.

"That is yet another place I have to examine,"